

**I. Amendments to the Specification**

On page 1 of the specification, please delete the paragraph under the heading "CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS" and replace it with the following new paragraph:

-- This application is a continuation of prior U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/227,038, filed August 23, 2002, now U.S. Patent 6,703,516; which is a continuation of prior U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/690,301, filed October 17, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,458,973, and priority is claimed under 35 U.S.C. § 120. In addition, priority is claimed under 35 U.S.C. §119 to Italian Patent Application No. MI2000A 000050, filed January 18, 2000. --

On page 1 of the specification, please replace the last sentence of the second paragraph under the heading "Field of the Invention", before the heading "Background of the Invention", with the following amended sentence:

--In particular, 5-carboxyphthalide is an intermediate useful in the synthesis of citalopram, a well-known antidepressant drug, whose preparation using said intermediate is described in the International Patent Application WO 00023431, now U.S. Patent 6,365,747, and in the corresponding Italian Patent Application IT1999 MI 0001724, whose contents are incorporated by reference herein. --